

February 8, 2002

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STEENS MOUNTAIN ADVISORY COUNCIL TO MEET IN BURNS, OREGON

The fourth Steens Mountain Advisory Council (SMAC) meeting has been scheduled for February 28 and March 1, 2002. The SMAC will meet at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Burns District Office, 28910 Hwy 20 West, Hines, Oregon, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., local time, on February 28, and 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on March 1.

Topics to be discussed at this meeting include review of action items (meeting process, Stonehouse Environmental Assessment (EA), juniper management, signs, Interim Special Recreation Permit Handbook, recreation monitoring, and Interim Management Policy), resource management planning process update, cultural resources, tribal concerns, overview of current EA list, review and prioritize issues, wilderness access update, agenda items for upcoming meetings, and other matters that may reasonably come before the SMAC.

The entire meeting is open to the public. Information to be distributed to the SMAC is requested 10 days prior to the start of the SMAC meeting and should be sent to Rhonda Karges, BLM Burns District Office, 28910 Hwy 20 West, Hines, Oregon 97738. Public comment opportunities have been scheduled from 11:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., local time, on February 28, 2002, and again on March 1, 2002, from 11:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., local time. These two, half-hour public comment periods, which can be extended by the Chair, will be the only opportunities for the public to participate in the meeting.

MORE

During the course of the last three meetings, the SMAC has made several formal, consensus-based, recommendations to the BLM. The recommendations were regarding project implementation funding to create the no livestock grazing area created by the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act (Act) of 2000, the Roaring Springs land exchange as identified in the Act, recreation monitoring, adoption of the Interim Management Policy, the Interim Special Recreation Permit Handbook revisions, and process-orientated procedures. The SMAC has also created three, fact-finding subcommittees; one for signs/public education chaired by Harland Yriarte, one for winter recreation chaired by Cindy Witzel, and the final subcommittee was created to review the Interim Special Recreation Permit Handbook also chaired by Cindy Witzel. This SMAC shows the spirit of cooperation and determination to manage the land within the bounds of the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area (CMPA) with integrity and dedication. The BLM commends the work of the SMAC.

The SMAC was established by the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act of 2000. The Secretary of the Interior appointed the 12-member council on August 14, 2001, pursuant to the Act. The SMAC's purpose is to provide representative counsel and advice to the BLM regarding (1) new and unique approaches to management of the land within the bounds of the CMPA, (2) cooperative programs and incentives for landscape management that meet human needs, maintain and improve the ecological and economic integrity of the area, and (3) preparation and implementation of a management plan for the CMPA.

MORE

Members currently serving on the SMAC are:

Vacant (No CMPA-financial interest)
Stacy Davies (Grazing Permittee)
Alice Elshoff (Environmental Representative- Local)
E. Ron Harding (Wild Horse Management)
Thomas Harris, Chair (Mechanized or Consumptive Recreation)
Wanda Johnson (Burns Paiute Tribe)
Jason Miner (Fish and Recreational Fishing)
Steve Purchase (State Government Liaison (nonvoting member)
Jerry Sutherland, Vice Chair (Environmental Representative- State)
Thomas Wendel (Dispersed Recreation)
Hoyt Wilson (Grazing Permittee)
Cindy Witzel (Recreational Permit Holder)
Harland Yriarte (Private Landowner)

The Designated Federal Official is Miles Brown, BLM's Andrews Resource Area Field Manager.
For more information on the SMAC or the upcoming meeting, contact Rhonda Karges, BLM, at the above address or call (541) 573-4400, weekdays between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., local time.

#####BLM#####